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Consideration of special reports

Special reports

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its 2000 session, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, in accordance with paragraph 61 (c) of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, requested the following organization to submit a special report to the Committee at its resumed 2000 session (see E/2000/88 (Part II), para. 75):

United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation

2. At the same session, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations also requested the following organization to submit a follow-up on the report submitted to the Committee at its resumed session (see E/2000/88 (Part II), paras. 123 and 124):

World Confederation of Labour

3. The information received by the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is herewith transmitted to the Committee for its consideration.

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I. United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation Special Consultative Status

A. Background

At its 2000 session, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had before it a complaint by the representative of Cuba to the Commission on Human Rights regarding the accreditation in Geneva by the International Council of the Association for Peace in the Continents (ASOPAZCO) of a number of persons at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights who, according to the delegation of Cuba, "followed clear patterns of violations against the provisions included in Council resolution 1996/31". Noting the ties between the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation (UTNSC) and ASOPAZCO, the Committee, pursuant to paragraph 61 (c), requested UTNSC to submit a special report on its activities to the Committee at its resumed 2000 session. In particular, the Committee requested information on the activities undertaken between UTNSC and ASOPAZCO.

The Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat transmitted the request for a special report to the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation. The Section received a letter dated 4 September 2000 with regard to this matter; that letter and its two attachments are set out in section B below. It also received a letter dated 25 October 2000, which is set out in section C below, transmitting the special report of UTNSC, which is set out in section D below. A letter dated 18 December 2000 from the Non-Governmental Organizations Section to UTNSC, requesting additional information, is set out in section E below.

B. Letter dated 4 September 2000 from the President of United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section

Background

I have the honour to attach herewith a set of documents, and would be most grateful if you would bring them to the attention of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. The Committee is about to resume consideration of the case of the International Council of the Associations for Peace in the Continents (ASOPAZCO), with which my name has been indirectly and inappropriately associated.

I should be pleased if you would study these documents in advance; this will enable you to form a clearer and more precise opinion on the real nature of this sordid affair, which is based on an unspeakable web of lies and perjury. As you will see, the documents have been sent today to the Permanent Missions of Cuba in Geneva and New York.

(*Signed*) Henry **Bandier**
Founder and President

1. Letter dated 4 September 2000 from United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation to the Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

I have the honour to attach herewith a set of documents, which I have also transmitted to His Excellency the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva, concerning the case of the International Council of the Associations for Peace in the Continents (ASOPAZCO), in which I am indirectly involved, and which will once again be submitted to the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in September.

Since the so-called Professor Francis Dessart continues to persecute me with the declared goal of taking control of the organization of which I am Founder and President, in the interests of a sect which is well known internationally, I have found it necessary to take legal action under criminal law.

It is impossible to judge the merits of the case in the current situation, since the web of lies which has been put together will inevitably be seriously detrimental to the organizations concerned. In the circumstances, I believe it is my duty to provide you with all the information relating to this case. I am fully convinced that you will give all the necessary attention to this information, which will enable you to reach your judgement with full knowledge of the facts.

I am, of course, entirely at your disposal for any additional information you may require. I thank you in advance most sincerely for your attention to this appalling affair which is totally baseless and is the product of the imaginations of certain unscrupulous individuals.

I would have liked to be able to travel to New York for the meeting at which this matter will be discussed again, but unfortunately my wife recently passed away following a long illness, after fifty years of marriage. I am still in a state of shock owing to this devastating loss and, in addition, I am suffering at the age of 85 from a progressive ailment which is likely to lead to total blindness in the near future.

The file before the Committee is absolute rubbish. All the third-party documents contained in it are completely false and result from totally dishonest motives. I can attest to this on my honour and under oath.

(*Signed*) Henry **Bandier**
Founder and President

2. Letter dated 4 September 2000 from United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation to the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations at Geneva

A letter dated 31 May 2000 which was sent to you by Professor Francis Dessart of Namur, Belgium, implicates myself and the organization of which I am the Founder and President. This is not connected with the International Council of the Associations for Peace in the Continents (ASOPAZCO), which is another organization and of which I am merely the representative in Geneva; I have not so far developed any significant activities in relation with ASOPAZCO which could be of interest to your country.

Quite naturally, you transmitted that letter to your diplomatic mission in New York, where it was used in making a formal complaint against ASOPAZCO; that complaint is currently under consideration by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and will later be considered by the Economic and Social Council.

I have been informed through official channels of the contents of the letter and other documents attached to it, and I must state that I formally challenge the "information" contained therein, which I consider seriously libellous and which fully justifies the criminal proceedings I have begun against the author and his accomplices. I am seeking damages for the serious moral injury that has been done both to myself and to the organization I represent.

The contents of the document are an unspeakable web of deceit, as I shall easily be able to demonstrate. I have convincing proof that the intentions of "Professor" Dessart are dictated to him by a well-known sect which is seeking by all possible means to obtain control of a non-governmental organization in order to gain entry to the United Nations and disseminate its destructive propaganda there.

Leaving it to the President of ASOPAZCO to defend herself against the false accusations which have been made against her, I shall reply only to the allegations made against me directly and which consequently cause serious injury to the organization I head.

I was invited to attend a meeting held in Madrid on 3 and 4 November 1999, organized by Ms. Maripaz Martinez Nieto, President of ASOPAZCO and Director of the Mederos Foundation, to celebrate the founding of the latter. The President of the Mederos Foundation is a well-known personality wishing to develop activities for the protection of human rights in general. I am not a member of that organization.

It is true that a great number of exiled Cubans were present, but I do not see anything in that fact which could be considered as contrary to human rights. I can solemnly declare that none of the statements made by the various speakers mentioned any intent to carry out terrorist acts against your country with the aim of physically eliminating its leader. I was not invited to speak, and I was introduced solely as a human rights activist and (I have no reason to hide the fact) a friend of Cuban exiles, as I am of Tibetans,

Tamils and many other peoples wishing their voices to be heard at the United Nations during sessions of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. However, that by no means justifies considering me as a terrorist; indeed, I am fiercely opposed to all forms of terrorism. I have my opinions which I express orally or in writing, but I do no more than that, and there are certain limits which I respect.

The letter alleges that I cleverly managed to pass myself off as a United Nations representative. Nothing could be further from the truth, and as proof I am enclosing a photocopy of an item in the Madrid newspaper *ABC* which clearly shows that I did not misuse any title which does not belong to me. I am very careful in this regard and unfortunately I often have to correct journalists who do not always appropriately interpret the correct titles supplied to them. However, we are powerless to change this; one would have to spend all one's time correcting journalists' errors. That allegation was therefore a dishonest claim on the part of Professor Dessart, who was not present at the meeting and is now trying to avenge himself for having been ousted as Vice-President as a result of his disloyalty, fraudulent manoeuvres, defamation, attempts to destabilize the organization, forgery, and the use of forgeries, etc.

I declare on my honour that there is no collusion between myself and the Mederos Foundation; I was not aware of the latter's existence until the day of the meeting.

I certainly have been on very friendly terms with Maripaz Martinez Nieto for the past 15 years, but there is surely no harm in that. Our relationship is not restricted to human rights issues, and are in no way related to political matters.

ASOPAZCO obtained its consultative status through its own efforts. All I did, on the legal level, was to draft its statutes in accordance with the provisions of Swiss legislation; although I am French, I know Swiss law very well.

Mr. Dessart claims in his letter that ASOPAZCO has transferred its headquarters from Madrid to my address in Ferney-Voltaire. Nothing could be further from the truth, and this can be proved at any time. No organization, whether pro- or anti-Castro, is located at my personal address on the outskirts of Geneva. My home is entirely open to anyone and my secretariat is at the disposal of anyone who calls upon the services of my organization; documentation is freely available on request.

Mr. Dessart alleges that a general meeting ousted me in November 1999 while I was in Madrid, where I stayed for only 40 hours. That general meeting comprised four persons, one of whom is entirely unknown to me and was in New York, another who held no function in the organization and was actually with me in Madrid together with his wife, and a third whom I had co-opted a few weeks beforehand on the express request of Mr. Dessart. It was not difficult for me to foil this attempted coup, by removing the only two persons present out of the four who had resorted to this sinister and fraudulent manoeuvre, which has now been brought to the attention of the courts.

I see no need to take up any more of your valuable time, but if you need any additional information, I am entirely at your disposal and willing to visit you if necessary. Although our views differ on one particular policy matter, I am nonetheless a man of courtesy and honour and I love all my fellow-humans regardless of their opinions; I also still hope for a revival of traditional, fundamental human values.

(*Signed*) Henry **Bandier**
Founder and President

C. Letter dated 25 October 2000 from the President of the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the special report requested of me in connection with the problem of ASOPAZCO.

I am of course prepared to reply to any further questions that may be put to me by the distinguished members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. I wish to reaffirm on my honour that none of the accusations made against me by the self-styled Professor Francis Dessart, an unquestioning supporter of the bogus Church of Scientology, who is currently the subject of a criminal complaint lodged by

me with the competent courts in connection with a number of very serious acts, is true.

I can make available to the Committee, if necessary, a set of authentic documents proving the veracity of my assertions.

(*Signed*) Henry **Bandier**
President and Founder

D. Special report on the activities of United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation

I have the honour to submit to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations the special report requested of me in connection with the complaints made against the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation which has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and against me, Henry Bandier, the Agency's President and Founder.

On 31 May 2000, a letter from Professor Francis Dessart, a resident of Namur, Belgium (of which we have a copy), was sent to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations calling into question the activities of our organization and my own, as its President and Founder, in relation to Cuba. Other letters were also sent, but unfortunately we are not aware of their content.

Allow me to inform you of our astonishment on reading this letter. Our astonishment was still greater to see that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations gave even the slightest credence to it, despite the lack of any serious evidence. Since we are not aware of the content of the other letters, it is very difficult for us to respond to them.

It should be pointed out that Mr. Dessart was the Vice-President of our organization. Mr. Dessart's intrigues led the management of the United Towns Agency to remove him from the post of Vice-President. This was done in conformity with the procedure stipulated in the Agency's regulations. He is currently the subject of a criminal complaint lodged by me.

Incapable of assuming his responsibilities, Mr. Dessart is trying tirelessly and by every means to damage the current UTNSC administration.

Indeed, the accusations brought before the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations are the fruit of the flights of fancy of evil minds whose overactive imaginations are attempting to take over the running of our organization in order to place it in the service of a cult known throughout the world, which without this facade could not obtain consultative status with the Council.

Having said this, I am pleased to be able to exercise my right to defend myself, which the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations scrupulously respects, in order to throw light on this whole sordid affair.

Before replying to the questions put to me concerning our organization's relationship (indeed even collusion) with ASOPAZCO and possible links with movements opposed to the Cuban regime, I should first like to describe to you briefly our organization's philosophy and the spirit that imbues our daily endeavours.

The United Towns Agency, the organization of which I am the President and Founder, works in strictest compliance with the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations and Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and the arrangements approved therein.

One of the tasks of our organization is to inform the non-governmental organizations that I represent, the members of these same organizations and concerned organizations about United Nations activities in the various fields covered by the Agency. This work is carried out faithfully because it is based, among others, on the working documents, press releases and texts issued by the United Nations services and on our records of the conferences, commissions, committees, working groups and other bodies in which we participate. Our organization is thus making a substantial contribution to the promotion of the activities of the United Nations and of its Member States.

Moreover, our organization has never passed any comment or judgement on the internal affairs of a Member State of the United Nations, nor has it ventured to conduct activities that would undermine the sovereignty of a Member State, as certain detractors might imply.

It is hardly in our organization's interests to adopt a suicidal attitude, since our only goal is to contribute

to the best of our ability to the well-being of humanity, without harming the United Nations or its Member States in any way.

Our organization's philosophy is to help any human being in distress, wherever they may be and whatever their nationality, colour, sex or religion, the aim being to alleviate their suffering and to facilitate as best we can their integration in the country of residence. Some Cuban exiles have received assistance from the United Towns Agency, just as many other exiles, immigrants and refugees of various nationalities have done. This assistance has never been directed against any country, still less Cuba, the country mentioned in the false accusations.

I have been asked to explain the nature of the Agency's and my own relationship with ASOPAZCO. In my case, the relationship was two levels: personal and professional.

Before establishing a relationship with ASOPAZCO, I had a long-standing friendship with the current President of the aforementioned organization, Maripaz Martínez Nieto. Because of my professional activities, which had nothing to do with the United Towns Agency because, at that time, this organization did not yet exist, I lived for more than 20 years in Spain. It was in this context that I made the acquaintance of Ms. Martínez Nieto.

As to my professional relationship with ASOPAZCO, I wish to inform the Committee that ASOPAZCO and the United Towns Agency are two entirely separate organizations and that there is no collusion between them. ASOPAZCO is indeed based in Madrid, not in Geneva or Ferney-Voltaire, France, as has been claimed. All the official documents supporting this assertion are available to all interested parties.

Furthermore, I am a member neither of the board of ASOPAZCO nor of the aforementioned organization. The allegation that the presidencies of the two organizations in question are interchangeable is nonsense.

However, after ASOPAZCO obtained consultative status with the Council in 1999, I was asked, for reasons of convenience, to represent the organization in Geneva, a task that I accepted. The only activities that I have undertaken thus far, at the request of Ms. Martínez Nieto on behalf of ASOPAZCO, have consisted in accrediting delegates at the most recent session of the Commission on Human Rights and reserving a meeting room outside the framework of the official meetings. It was clearly agreed that the delegates could attend the official meetings without being granted speaking time. This provision was respected. If Ms. Martínez made a statement, it was on behalf of ASOPAZCO and not UTNSC.

You will also note that no member of the United Towns Agency took part in the informal meeting organized by ASOPAZCO. Furthermore, our organization made no statement at the session of the Commission on Human Rights, or at that of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, referring directly or indirectly to the Republic of Cuba.

I have also been criticized for attending a meeting organized by ASOPAZCO in Madrid on 3 November 1999. I wish to make it clear that I went to this meeting in my personal capacity, at the invitation of the organizers. My travel costs were paid by the inviting organization, not the United Towns Agency. I was introduced during this meeting only in my capacity as an ardent human rights defender and a permanent delegate to the United Nations representing international non-governmental organizations, not as a "permanent representative to the United Nations", as Mr. Dessart has fraudulently claimed (see press clipping from *ABC* of Madrid dated 4 November). I made no statement during this meeting, I repeat: "none".

Regarding the question as to whether UTNSC or I, in my personal capacity, had any relationship with "active" opposition movements, I can confirm on my honour that neither UTNSC nor I have any relationship of any kind with such movements. Indeed, we know nothing of them and are not aware of their existence.

Lastly, I wish to make it clear that, since our organization's establishment, we have conducted our activities in a spirit of cooperation with the organs of the United Nations and transparency. Naturally, we intend to continue this process by contributing in a positive manner to the activities of the United Nations and, in consequence, of its Member States, and we plan to apply as soon as possible for reclassification to the general category.

In order to enable us to continue in this direction, we are counting on all the perceptiveness and the

innermost conviction of the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to maintain the Agency's consultative status with the Council.

E. Letter dated 18 December 2000 from the Non-Governmental Organizations Section to the President of United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation requesting additional information

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 25 October 2000, transmitting the special report of United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, as requested by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at its 2000 session.

Additional information has been requested as follows:

1. Kindly provide information on the activities undertaken by UTNSC from 1998 to 2000 inclusive, in particular as they relate to the United Nations.

2. Please list the events/conferences/seminars organized by your organization.

3. Provide a list of the publications issued by the organization over the three-year period 1998-2000.

4. Provide information on the participation by UTNSC in United Nations meetings, including date and place of meeting, and indicate whether written or oral statements were made and on what subject.

5. List projects undertaken with other NGOs, in particular full details of any projects undertaken with ASOPAZCO.

6. Kindly provide detailed information on the links between ASOPAZCO and UTNSC.

The Committee will meet in January 2001 and will review the special report of UTNSC. Therefore, kindly submit the requested information urgently.

(*Signed*) Hanifa **Mezoui**

II. World Confederation of Labour

A. Background

At its resumed 1998 session, the Committee had before it the special report of the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) (see E/C.2/1998/2), which had been requested in response to a complaint by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the organization's accreditation of unacceptable representatives to the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights. The observer of the Islamic Republic of Iran had not been satisfied with the report, and had requested additional information and the presence of a representative from the organization at the 1999 session of the Committee. At the 1999 session of the Committee, additional information had been presented to the Committee by the organization (see E/C.2/1999/3). A representative of WCL responded to questions posed by the Committee and proposed a dialogue with the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva. The observer of the Islamic Republic of Iran had welcomed the proposal; however, he had found the report inadequate and had asked the Committee to ask a new special report from the organization to answer the questions raised. At its resumed 1999 session, the Committee had reviewed the new special report (see E/C.2/1999/3/Add.1) submitted by the organization. Furthermore, the representative of the organization had informed the Committee that WCL was engaged in intensive discussions on the matter with the International Labour Organization (ILO) representatives at Geneva.

At its 2000 session, the Committee was informed by the organization that discussions were still ongoing between WCL and the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The observer delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran requested that the organization not accredit in the future the individuals wrongly accredited in 1998 and that it freeze its activities until the investigation was concluded. The Committee decided to defer the matter to its resumed 2000 session for further consideration.

B. Letter dated 28 November 2000 from the General Secretary of the World Confederation of Labour to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section

Thank you for your letter requesting a follow-up report regarding the pending matter with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the moment, an opportunity is being explored through ILO for a WCL mission to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Meanwhile, we wish to inform the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations that the individuals who had participated in the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights and around whom the controversy developed with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are no longer members of the Democratic Union of Iranian Workers (DUIW) and do not have any relationship with WCL.

As you are aware, we had frozen the participation of the said individuals in any United Nations activities on behalf of WCL pending a resolution of the matter.

We therefore formally request that the NGO Committee bring this matter to a closure.

(*Signed*) Willy **Thys**
General Secretary